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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 HA-05 IO-13 EUR-12 SVC-00 /064 W
----------086962 240445Z /14
R 231640Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2252
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, GN, SF
SUBJECT: BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT EASING ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SUMMARY: BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA FELL TO 11.1 PERCENT IN FEBRUARY 1978 ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS. THIS CONTRADICTS PRIVATE ESTIMATES WHICH CONTINUE TO SHOW INCRASES. END SUMMARY

1. SOUTH AFRICAN DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS HAD RELEASED RE-

SULTS OF ITS SECOND SURVEY ON BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT INDICATING THAT IN FEBRUARY 1978 BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT AMOUNTED TO 569,000. THIS COMPARES TO 633,000 REPORTED IN FIRST

SURVEY CONDUCTED IN OCTOBER 1977. ECONMICALLY ACTIVE BLACKS INCREASED FROM 5,044,000 IN OCTOBER TO 5,144,000 IN FEBRUARY. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE THUS INCREASED FROM 12.4 PERCENT TO

11.1 PERCENT. MALE UNEMPLOYMENT WAS 8.1 PERCENT, FEMALE 17.9 PERCENT.
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2. MOST RECENT PRIVATE SURVEY, THAT OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING SERVICES AFRICA (IMSA); TAKEN BETWEEN OCTOBER 1977 AND MARCH 1978, ESTIMATED UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG BLACKS AT 1,311,300, MORE THAN TWICE THE OFFICAIL SAG FIGURE AL-

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THOUGH WORKING POPULATION IS LARGER DUE TO THE INCLU-
SION OF TRANSKEI AND BOPHUTHATSWANA. EVEN THIS TOTAL
IS LOWER THAN SOME OTHER PRIVATE ESTIMATES OF UNEMPLOY-
MENT AMONG BLACKS, FOR EXAMPLE SIMKIN'S STUDY WHICH
CLAIMED THAT 2.3 MILLION OF ALL RACES WERE UNEMPLOYED
(DURBAN A-49).

3. SENBANK ANALYSIS SAYS THAT UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG
BLACKS HAS REACHED "ALARMING PROPORTIONS FROM ALL
POINT OF VIEW." IT PROJECTS THAT NEW EMPLOYMENT OP-
PORTUNITIES WILL RISE AT RATE OF 1.5 PERCENT OVER NEXT
FEW YEARS WHILE LABOR FORCE WILL GROW 2.7 PERCENT. IT
POINTS OUT THAT, DESPITE ADMONITIONS TO EMPHASIZE LABOR-
INTENSIVE INVESTMENT, GOVERNMENT POLICY ACTUALLY CON-
TINUES TO FAVOR CAPITAL-INTENSIVE. LACK OF MOBILITY
OF BLACK LABOR ARISING FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROLS IS ONE
FACTOR.

4. REGISTERED UNEMPLOYED AMONG WHITES, ASIANS, AND
COLOREDS DECLINED FROM 34,600 IN DECEMBER 1977
TO 31,200 IN JUNE, ABOUT 1.4 PERCENT OF LABOR FORCE
ALTHOUGH ACTUAL UNEMPLOYED BELIEVED TO BE 2-3 TIMES AS GREAT.

5. COMMENT: WE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (PRETORIA 673) SHORT-
COMINGS IN SAG SURVEY OF BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT. OFFICIALS
CONDUCTING SURVEY ARE NEVERTHELESS DEFENSIVE OF THEIR AP-
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PROACH AND ASSERT CONTINUING EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO
IMPROVE IT.

6. OBJECTIVE IS TO SURVEY 10,000 BLACK HOUSEHOLDS
USING BLACK TEACHERS LIVING NEARBY. FIRST SURVEY REACHED
OVER 6,000 HOUSEHOLDS AND NEW ONE REACH 7,500 (45,000

PERSONS). DEFINITION OF UNEMPLOYMENT IS STRICT, INCLUDING
HAVING WORKED LESS THAN 5 HOURS IN PREVIOUS WEEK.

7. IMSA OBTAINED ITS FIGURES AS PART OF A WIDER READER-
SHIP SURVEY OF 17,800 INDIVIDUALS IN ALL ECONOMIC AND
GEOGRAPHIC SITUATIONS. PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER FOR IMSA ACCOUNTS
FOR HIGHER BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT TOTALS BY BROADER DEFINI-
TION OF UNEMPLOYMENT,MORE HONEST RESPONSES FROM BLACKS
WHO DISTRUST ANY SAG AGENCY, AND PARTICIPATION OF

BLACKS ILLEGALLY IN WHITE AREAS.
EDMONDSON

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